

November 7, 2009

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Rep. Michael Arcuri (NY-24) issued the following statement today in support of the Affordable Healthcare for America Act (H.R. 3962), which provides an opportunity for individuals, families and small businesses who currently can't afford health insurance to purchase it, maintains the existing choice of doctors and private health insurance plans, and aims to level the playing field and make Upstate New York more business-friendly by lowering health care costs:

"When I first ran for Congress in 2006, I promised the people of the 24th Congressional District that I would work to reform our nation's health care system. When an attempt was made to rush a health care bill to a vote back in July, I stood up and said that we were moving too quickly and I would vote against any health care bill until I had a chance to meet face-to-face and talk to my constituents about their health care reform priorities. In the months of August through October, I was a part of nearly 30 public forums, including 10 town hall meetings, across the district. I also held countless one-on-one meetings with health care professionals, small business owners and concerned citizens to listen to each of them and their stories and to learn more about how the skyrocketing costs of health care are plaguing the finances of working families and damaging our local economy.

"When I returned to Washington, I fought non-stop to change the original bill based on the needs and priorities of the people and small businesses I'm privileged to represent in Congress. I am proud to say that the health care bill we will vote on in the coming days does not increase the federal deficit and includes the following 10 key provisions, which I support:

1. Prohibits discrimination by health insurance companies based on pre-existing conditions. No one can be denied coverage or charged outrageous rates because of past medical circumstances;
2. Allows parents to keep their children or dependents on their health insurance until the age of 27;

3. Caps annual out-of-pocket medical expenses, providing financial security for working families and small businesses;
4. Provides much needed choice, with a public health insurance option competing with private insurers, so that individuals, families and small businesses without health insurance can finally afford to buy it;
5. Closes the Medicare Part D prescription drug 'Donut Hole' and allows Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices to lower health care costs for seniors;
6. Creates competition in the private health insurance industry to lower costs for small business owners who provide health benefits for their employees, allowing them to invest in their businesses and create jobs;
7. Cuts out waste, fraud and abuse in Medicare, which according to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) will cut the deficit by \$30 billion;
8. Creates incentives for health wellness and prevention programs, lowering health care costs for people who choose to lead healthier lifestyles;
9. Protects working families and small business owners by **not** taxing high-quality, private health insurance benefits; and,
10. Allows for the sale of insurance across state lines, encouraging competition that will reduce costs.

"Inaction is not an option. We've been debating health care reform for over 70 years. For the sake of our economic future, Upstate New York jobs and the future of our health care system, I will vote in favor of this health care reform legislation when it comes before the House of Representatives."

*Editor's Note: HR 3962 received the endorsement of over 300 business, health care and advocacy organizations including: the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), American Medical Association (AMA), American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Association, American Heart Association - American Stroke Association, Alliance for Retired Americans, National Association of Community Health Centers, National Breast Cancer Coalition, National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, Small Business Majority, the US Women's Chamber of Commerce.

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